

## Winterize your home

### USDA Rural Development 504 Home Repair Loan and Grant Program can help

While the temperature is dropping, unfortunately heating costs are not. Finding the resources to pay for home improvements can be a challenge.



USDA Rural Development has funding available to assist families and/or individuals with very low income winterize their homes. Funding can be used to purchase/repair heating systems, replace windows and doors, insulation and other housing improvements that can reduce heating costs.

The [504 Home Repair Loan and Grant program](#) is available to applicants with very-low income, who currently own their home, cannot obtain conventional financing, and reside in a rural area. Low interest loan funds up to \$20,000 are available at a rate of 1% for 20 years.

Limited grant funds are available for individuals 62 years of age or older, with a \$7,500 maximum lifetime amount. Eligibility and funding are based on income limits specific to the county in which you reside.

Contact any of our eight field offices for more information on this program (see backside of newsletter) or visit the Colorado Rural Development webpage at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/co/sfhrepairgrants.html>



### Mark your calendar

**Annual Multi Family Housing Borrower Conference**  
**April 24—26, 2006.**

More information will be provided.  
Contact your servicing office.

### What's happening in Rural Development in Colorado...

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## STATE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### Happy New Year!

Fiscal year 2005 was a phenomenal year for USDA Rural Development in Colorado. Over \$250 million were invested in rural communities across our great state. This year we funded the largest Community Facility project in Colorado. The Yuma Hospital District received \$24.5 million in loan funding to build a 12 bed critical care access replacement hospital. Pikes Peak Regional Medical Center (PPRMC) Association received a \$14 million loan to construct a new 25 bed primary care hospital with 24 hour emergency service in Woodland Park. We also helped over 500 rural Coloradoans achieve the American dream of homeownership in 2005.



*Acting State Director Joe Hostettler and  
Under Secretary for Rural Development  
Thomas C. Dorr.*

Colorado Rural Development has also experienced some changes in our management team. In September, our former State Director, Gigi Dennis, resigned to become the Secretary of State for Colorado. Under Secretary for Rural Development, Thomas C. Dorr has appointed me to serve as the Acting State Director. I assure you the agency's commitment to the future of rural communities will remain.

Also, during the Spring/Summer of last year, our management team was joined by Jamie Spakow, Rural Housing Programs Director, Mike Bailey, Business and Community Programs Director, and Pattie Snidow, West Area Manager. In January 2006, Leroy Cruz, East Area Manager and former Business and Community Programs Director has retired after 39 years with the agency. I wish to thank Leroy for his service and dedication to the agency; he will truly be missed.

Even though 2005 was a phenomenal year, I believe Rural Development will have an even better year in 2006. Our staff is ready to assist individuals and communities in their endeavors. Please contact any of our eight offices listed on the back of this newsletter for further assistance.



JOSEPH H. HOSTETTLER  
Acting State Director



## La Puente receives grant funding

**La Puente Home**, a nonprofit organization providing emergency shelter and food assistance for the homeless and community members in crisis throughout the San Luis Valley, was awarded a **\$25,000 grant** from USDA Rural Development.

The funding, provided through the Community Facility Program, funds essential services, such as child care centers, clinics, fire stations, etc., in rural communities with populations of 20,000 or less. La Puente will use the funds to upgrade their homeless shelter and soup kitchen to safely and adequately serve the needs of the homeless and hungry.

In particular, USDA Rural Development will provide new kitchen equipment for the facility's community meals program and new dining room furnishings for handicapped accessibility.

The renovation will, in part, enlarge the dining hall and bring the facility up to current health and safety codes. These renovations will provide better organized space to serve men, women and families. The project will begin in mid-October and be completed late Spring of 2006.

## Mesa State College receives \$338,892 Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant

Mesa State College is the recipient of a \$338,892 Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant from USDA Rural Development. USDA Rural Development Acting State Director Joe Hostetler today (Dec. 13, 2005) presented Tim Foster,

president of Mesa State College (far left) and staff, with a ceremonial check.



The funds awarded will assist Mesa State in replacing the current video teleconferencing system with new equipment which meets regional and state-wide standards.

The connectivity and videoconferencing funded through this grant will provide increased access and decrease travel distances for selected western Colorado rural communities.

Mesa State estimates that more than 9,000 citizens will be served through this system by opening up access to advanced degrees in healthcare, business,

and education for individuals who have already obtained their

associate degrees through local programs and it will bring new opportunities for graduate degrees not previously available.

Participating institutions include Mesa State College and its satellite campuses in Montrose and Grand Junction; Colorado Mountain College's Roaring Fork Campus at Spring Valley near Glenwood Springs, the Alpine Campus in Steamboat Springs, and the Vail-Eagle Valley Campus in Edwards; Colorado Northwestern Community College Campuses



**Rural Development**

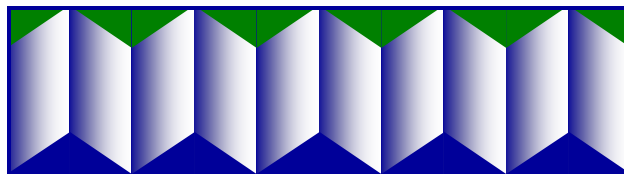
# Value Added Producer Grant Funding Applications Being Accepted

***Application deadline March 31, 2006***

USDA Rural Development announced the availability of approximately \$19 million in grants to support the development of value-added agriculture business ventures. Awards will be made on a competitive basis. Of the amount, \$1.5 million is set aside for applicants requesting \$25,000 or less. Awards may be made for planning activities or for working capital expenses, but not for both. The maximum grant amount for a planning grant is \$100,000 and the maximum grant amount for a working capital grant is \$300,000.

Grants are available to independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures interested in a competitively-awarded grant to fund one of the following two activities: (1) planning activities needed to establish available value-added marketing opportunity for an agricultural product (e.g. conduct a feasibility study, develop a business plan, develop a marketing plan); or (2) acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture that will allow producers to better compete in domestic and international markets.

Applications must be received no later than March 31, 2006. Detailed information about application procedures and program requirements can be viewed on the USDA Rural Development website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/nofas/index.html> For application questions regarding value added agricultural business ventures in Colorado, contact Dolores Sanchez-Maes, Loan Specialist, USDA Rural Development State Office, 720-544-2927 or via email at [dolores.sanchez-maes@co.usda.gov](mailto:dolores.sanchez-maes@co.usda.gov).



## **Guaranteed Lenders Corner**

A Fiscal Year 2006 budget that includes funding for the Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program (SFHGLP) has been passed by Congress and signed into law by the President. The program is funded at a level that will allow over \$3 billion in new loan guarantees during Fiscal Year 2006.

Colorado has received its full allocation and is accepting reservations for both new and refinanced loans. The guarantee fee will remain at its current level of 2 percent for new loans and 0.5 percent for refinances.

Your continued support of this program is greatly appreciated!



# Multi Family Housing (MFH) Update

## **MINC—Management Agent Interactive Network Connection:**

All borrowers with complexes of eight units or more are required to submit tenant transactions through MINC by February 24, 2006. Currently, less than 10% of Colorado's borrowers are not utilizing the system. Borrowers may use a service bureau to provide MINC automation if acquiring their own system is not cost effective. Borrowers should refer to HB-2-3560, Attachment 6-G "ACQUIRING AUTOMATION SUPPORT FOR MINC OR OTHER AUTOMATION NEEDS".

Until February 24, 2006, borrowers not using MINC must submit a hard copy of their tenant transactions to the Agency for receipt by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Regardless of the method used (MINC or hard copy), if the Agency does not receive the transactions by the tenth of the month in which they are due, the borrower will be subject to penalty.

Borrowers/Management Agents (B/MA) currently using MINC must review their transaction reports and necessary corrections on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month in which the transaction is effective, i.e. effective date of November 1, 2005, corrected on or before November 10, 2005. Tenant transactions may be sent anytime during the month. A Tenant Certification (TC) which is transmitted before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month but was rejected and the correction was not submitted until after the 10<sup>th</sup>, it will be considered late and assessed penalties.

Do not wait until the official worksheet is released on the 17<sup>th</sup> of each month to review for discrepancies. The MINC message board provides information on revisions/enhancements to MINC, as well as, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and Error Conditions & System Messages to help determine why a transaction rejected and what is required to correct the transaction. The message board also contains RD 3560 Regulations, which can be used to retrieve necessary Rural Development handbooks and forms.

Additionally, borrowers who have not signed up for Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) and/or Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD), should do so as soon as possible. EFT allows direct deposit of rental assistance and PAD allows electronic payments from B/MA account with monthly approval of project worksheets on MINC. Contact your Servicing Office or the State Office MFH Staff for these forms.

## **Rental Assistance:**

Per the authority in the 7 CFR 3560 the Agency has taken a stronger position on the using and transferring of unused rental assistance. Unused rental assistance is now being reviewed on a monthly basis and you will be contacted if you are not using the number of units assigned to your complex.

**Management Fees:** Effective January 1, 2006, all Management Fees will be based on an amount per each occupied unit. Please refer to Handbook 2 for this amount as well as the "bundle of services" this fee covers.

## Colorado USDA Rural Development Office Locations

[www.rurdev.usda.gov/co/index.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/co/index.html)

Alamosa - 101 S. Craft Drive  
Alamosa, CO 81101 (719) 589-5661

Canon City -248 Dozier Avenue  
Canon City, CO 81212 (719) 275-4465

Cortez -- 628 West 5th Street  
Cortez, CO 81321 (970) 565-8416

Greeley- 4302 W. 9th Street Road  
Greeley, CO 80634 (970) 356-8097

Craig -- 356 Ranney Street, Suite 19  
Craig, CO 81625 (970) 824-3476

Las Animas - 760 Bent Ave.  
Las Animas, CO, 81054-1730 (719) 456-0120

Delta - 690 Industrial Blvd.  
Delta, CO 81416-2812 (970) 874-5735

Wray - P.O. Box 405, 247 Clay Street, Suite #2  
Wray, CO 80758 (970) 332-3107

State Office - 655 Parfet Street  
Lakewood, CO 80215 (720) 544-2903

*USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer.  
Complaints of discrimination should be sent to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights,  
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC, 20250-9410.*



*Committed to the future of rural communities*

USDA Rural Development  
655 Parfet Street  
Lakewood, CO 80215